

A 5-Minute Gratitude Practice: Focus on the Good by Tapping into Your Senses

This 5-minute mindfulness practice cultivates gratitude for life's small delights as you move through the senses.

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Waking up this morning, I glanced at my cell phone and noticed the weather app ominously predicting many days of snow and icy temperatures ahead. Brrr! I could feel the chill of dark thoughts starting to gather. I could feel my body creak with cold and [aging](#).

Life's challenges were seemingly everywhere. And yet...I was smiling. I was cheerful. I was grateful. What? Was I crazy?

As one of my [New Year's resolutions](#), I'd made a point of tuning my

awareness toward [appreciation of life's small delights](#). I was curious about what I would discover if I focused intentionally on the things that I appreciated. This morning, as I let wakefulness peel the dark back, I could smell my neighbor's coffee brewing. The snow outside gently buffered the sounds of the world. I could sense my husband's warm weight in the bed. I took a long moment to enjoy the muted winter light edging in around the slats of the window blinds.

There was nothing particularly special going on, but I noticed that being grateful for little things was already lifting my dark thoughts. Difficulties were still present, but awareness of my gratitude was shifting my view, letting me see that everything was not dark and cold—in fact, many sights and sounds were quite lovely.

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Would you like to join me in cultivating a bit of gratitude together?

Mindfulness Practice: Cultivate Gratitude Through the Senses

1. ***Use the breath to anchor yourself in the present moment.*** Our minds are always so easily pulled to busyness. Bring particular attention to feeling the breath, or something in the body, as you bring your shoulders down and orient your attention toward gratitude.
2. ***Next, bring to mind a sight you are grateful for.*** Move through

your senses, and find one thing to start with that you appreciate that comes to you from the world of sight, if you have this available. It could be a color...a shadow...a shape...a movement. Remember, it will never be like this again. What do you see right now, and can you feel grateful that you get to see this, whatever it is?

- 3. Now, shift to a scent you appreciate.** *As you continue to work with your senses, now take time to tune in with appreciation to an aroma. What do you notice? What about that glorious or interesting or subtle smell is making you smile? It could be gratitude for something familiar: a scent that brings comfort, upliftment; or maybe it's something you've never smelled before, and it just piques your curiosity, ignites you, enlivens you.*
- 4. Moving on, tune into any sounds around you.** *Allowing the world of smell to gently recede into the background, on an in-breath, shift your attention to your ears and the world of sound. Maybe notice what it feels like to [really listen](#). How many sounds can you notice, and can you feel grateful that you're able to experience sound, if you are? What can you notice about these sounds—far away? close? Perhaps you could play a piece of music that brings you joy, and have gratitude that it's so available? Or maybe it's the sound of children laughing, the sound of loved ones breathing, the sound of the beating of your own heart.*
- 5. The world of touch and texture beckons us next.** *We find so much to be grateful for in touch! If there's someone near who you can hug or who can hug you, notice how this makes you feel filled with gratitude for the joy of human contact. Or perhaps you have a beautiful pet that you can stroke and cuddle, or some lovely material with a texture that feels warm to the touch, soft, evocative. Let your senses ignite your gratitude! There's so much to be appreciative of.*
- 6. Shift to noticing and appreciating objects around you.** *Now take a moment to look around: Look down, look up, and from side to side. Appreciate how much effort must have gone into anything at all*

you own or use. Someone conceived of the need and many people worked on the details of the design. Much care even went into the packaging to deliver your item to you safely. What do you feel when you let yourself be grateful that all that talent went into making your life a little easier?

- 7. As you end this practice, carry this attitude of gratitude with you.** *One last little grateful tip: Why not offer your thanks to each person who does anything at all for you today? Even if it is their job to help you? When you're grateful, when you let your heart open up and be filled with appreciation, notice how being grateful makes you feel.*

I'm so grateful that you tuned in to this gratitude practice, and I appreciate your time, your effort, and your energy to be present, awake, and alive to your precious life. Have a beautiful day.

This mindfulness practice provides additional information to an article titled, "Thanks for This," which appeared in the April 2018 issue of Mindful magazine. [Subscribe to the digital issue of Mindful](#) to get immediate access to the April issue.



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